

## REMARKS

Continued prosecution and reconsideration of the above-identified application is respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the discussion that follows.

It is noted that claims 1-23 are pending in the application and that all of the claims stand rejected as discussed more fully below.

Independent claim 1, and thus also dependent claims 2-10; independent claim 11; independent 18, and thus also dependent claims 19-22; and independent claim 23 have been amended in a manner believed to more clearly distinguish over the cited prior art references and, along with original claim 12 and amended dependent claims 13-17, are believed to be in condition for allowance.

New claims 24-38 have been added and are also believed to be allowable.

On the merits, claims 1-23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) on U.S. Patent No. 6,347,302 to Joao in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,724,261 to Denney et al.

The basis for the Examiner's rejection of claims 1-5 and 7-23 is set forth on page 3 of the Office Action. With all due respect, it is difficult for applicant's undersigned attorney to understand exactly how the Examiner is applying the Denney et al. and Joao references in rejecting applicant's claims 1-5 and 7-23. The Examiner states that Denney et al. "discloses a rented articles (articles or sel-storage - sic, self storage) such as personal, residential and/or commercial office equipment ... as well as any other article, piece of equipment (which is seen to read as Applicant's claimed invention wherein it is stated that a method for renting to a customer a self-storage unit (or rental articles) located at a self-storage facility)...." The Examiner further states: "Joao fails to explicitly disclose a facility inspection of the self-storage or rental articles. However, Denney et al. discloses a data processing that includes a property

inspection (property or rental article)...." From this the Examiner concludes that "it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the rented articles of Joao by including property inspection as taught by Denney et al. because such modification would provide protection against liability which may arise as a result of wear and tear."

Applicant respectfully traverses the position taken by the Examiner. The Denney et al. reference teaches a relatively complex system and method for facilitating the inspection of a rental property and compiling inspection data for the rental property. The Joao reference teaches a relatively complex apparatus and method for processing insurance information and generating an insurance premium and a lease insurance policy for excess wear and tear for a leased entity or post-warranty repairs for a leased entity. Applicant's claimed method and system for renting a self-storage unit, on the other hand, can be readily used by customers without technical skills or special knowledge, aptitude or interest in conventional computerized and/or automated systems.

Neither Denney et al. nor Joao disclose a method or system for renting to a customer a self-storage unit located at a self-storage facility and that can accommodate what are often referred to as "techno-phobic" users. Denney et al. specifically state that their invention relates generally "to data processing system and methods and, more particularly, to data processing systems and methods for compiling data during property maintenance and inspection operations." The various objects set forth under Denney et al.'s summary of their invention clearly state that the Denney et al. invention relates to a data processing system for facilitating the inspection of a rental property and an associated method of compiling inspection and maintenance data for the rental property so as to provide for the organized and efficient tracking

of the assets and the relative condition and other characteristics of the assets of the rental property. (Col. 2, lines 29-46.)

In setting forth one aspect of the Denney et al. invention, it is stated that the various objects are provided by a data processing system "which includes a property inspection data entry device for compiling inspection data during the inspection of a property and which includes reader means (such as a scanner responsive to labels associated with the property and various items therein which include indicia representative of predetermined characteristics of the property and the various items therein), data entry means (such as a keypad having a plurality of keys and being responsive to actuating by actuation by an operator of the property inspection data entry device) and memory means (that stores the inspection data relative to the property received by both the reader means and the data entry means). (Col. 2, line 47 *et. seq.*) It is respectfully submitted that all embodiments of the Denney et al. disclosure rely on an operator who is equipped with a property inspection data entry device 10 which includes a reader means 12 in the form of a scanner, such as an optical scanner, operative to read labels associated with the property and that have indicia thereon representative of at least some predetermined characteristics of the property which, in respect to a rental unit, includes indicia representative of at least some predetermined characteristics of the rental property. In addition to the reader means or scanner 12, the Denney et al. data entry means may include a keypad having a number of keys which are individually responsive to actuation by the operator of the property inspection data entry device to enable entry of additional inspection data.

There is no teaching or suggestion in the Denney et al. reference of providing a method and/or system for renting to a customer a self-storage unit located at a self-storage facility and that includes providing and controlling access to a customer service area, automatically

establishing contact between a remote manager and a customer entering the customer service area so that the customer and manager can communicate using a communication link, communicating to the remote manager an indication of the customer's storage needs, communicating a recommended self-storage unit to the customer from the remote manager, facilitating inspection of the recommended self-storage unit by the customer, communicating credit information about the customer to the remote manager, and establishing a self-storage rental agreement between the customer and the self-storage facility under the guidance of the remote manager, as called for in applicant's claims. Moreover, the Denney et al. reference also does not teach or suggest the system called for in applicant's claim 23.

The Joao reference is directed to an apparatus and method for processing lease insurance information, and which, again, is not intended for, nor does it lend itself to use by, persons without technical skills, knowledge, aptitude or interest in the utilization of computerized systems. The Joao method includes a memory device for storing a first data set containing information for generating at least one of an insurance premium and an insurance policy for providing lease insurance for excess wear and tear for a leased entity or post-warranty repairs for a leased entity. The apparatus includes a processor for processing the first data set in conjunction with a second data set and a third data set, with the processor generating a fourth data set containing at least one of an insurance policy as aforementioned. The method and apparatus disclosed in the Joao reference employs a central processing unit (CPU) that stores various data and/or information relating to leasing and/or rental of vehicles, motor vehicles, trucks, etc. including data and/or information for particular individuals and/or business entities that may be helpful and/or desired by an insurer in determining whether to issue an insurance policy, product service or other coverage as disclosed and that enable the calculation of data maintained in the

data base for determining issuance of an insurance policy. The Joao reference does not relate to a specific piece of property that is to be inspected by a customer. In short, the Joao reference has no teaching or suggestion that would lead one to modify either the Joao or Denney et al. reference based upon each other so as to achieve applicant's claimed invention. Accordingly, applicant's amended claims are believed to be allowable over the Joao and Denney et al. references, taken either individually or in combination.

Claim 6 apparently stands rejected on Joao as set forth at the top of page 4 of the Office Action. Because claim 6 depends from claim 1, it includes all the limitations of claim 1 and is believed to distinguish over Joao for the reasons set forth in respect to claim 1. Accordingly, claim 6 is also believed to be in condition for allowance.

Being filed herewith is an Information Disclosure Statement pursuant to 37 CFR §§ 1.56, 1.97(c) and 1.98. The Examiner's attention is directed to listed U.S. patent No. 5,946,660 (McCarty et al.) that appears to be the most relevant to applicant's claimed invention. However, McCarty et al. disclose a much more complex computerized system for enabling a customer to undertake various self-storage related transactions without need for an attendant, whereas applicant's claimed method and system for renting a self-storage unit located at a self-storage facility entail communication between a rental customer and a remote manager who has significant control over the rental process. Applicant's claimed method and system is particularly adapted for use by persons lacking an aptitude for or interest in technical knowledge and skills ordinarily associated with computerized automated systems.

For the foregoing reasons, applicant's claims 1-38 as presented herein are believed to be in condition for allowance and such action is earnestly solicited. Should the Examiner believe a

telephone discussion with the applicant's attorney would assist in prosecution of the subject application, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner initiate such a discussion.

Respectfully submitted,

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